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ABSTRACT

Preparation and use of a written plan can increase the chance that people will do what has been planned using the ways selected and specified during the planning process. Program implementation plans should include the following elements: a review of product objectives and strategies: a statement of activities involved in meeting product objectives: definition of responsibility, time frame, cost estimates, expected results, and evaluation methods for each activity: and designation of the person responsible for managing the implementation of the program. Using information generated during resource identification, needs assessment, and strategy selection phases of the planning process, those responsible for committing and allocating resources can act to provide the resources where and when they are needed. Existing resource allocation practices should be evaluated, personnel needs and performance should be reviewed, cost-effectiveness studies should be conducted, implementation of zero-based budgeting or program budgeting should be considered, and alternative resource sources should be investigated. Examples of written product and process objectives are included. (Author/PGD)

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ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Six — Formulating the Program Implementation Plan and Securing and Allocating Resources

Seven — Operating and Evaluating the Program

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SYSTEMATIC PLANNING SERIES
FOR LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES

MONOGRAPH NUMBER 6

FORMULATING THE PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND SECURING AND ALLOCATING RESOURCES

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AUG 7 1980

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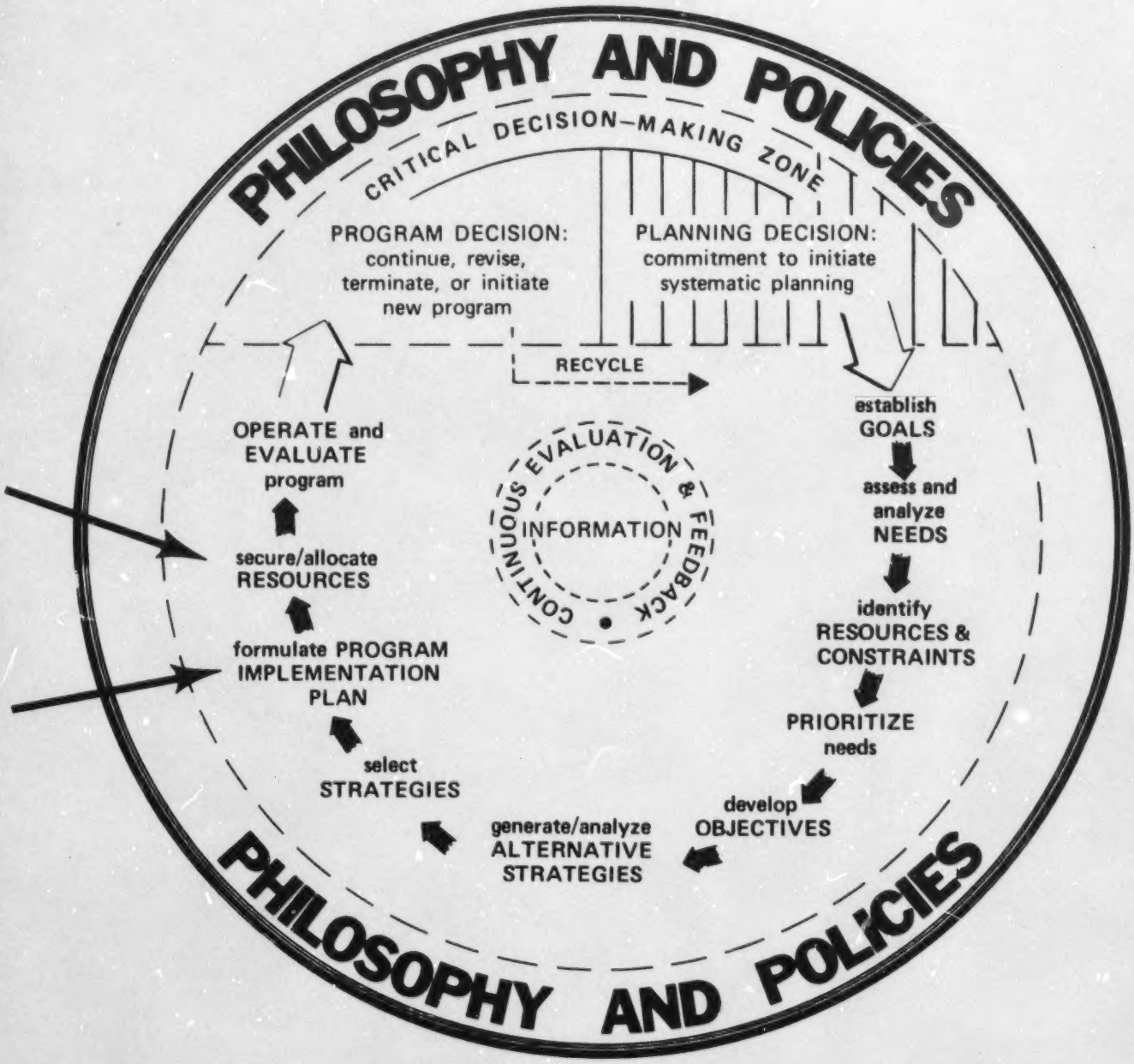

A PLANNING CYCLE

OFFICE OF PLANNING AND EVALUATION
ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION 1976

FORMULATING THE PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND SECURING AND ALLOCATING RESOURCES

Formulating the Program Implementation Plan

All of the activity carried out in preceding phases of the planning process will be of little consequence unless a sound, workable program implementation plan is formulated and followed. Effective generation, analysis, and selection of appropriate strategies (monograph number five) increases the probability that decision makers will arrive at the best problem solution decision. Following the systematic identification and selection of the strategy(ies) which seemingly offer(s) the best prospect for achieving the product objective(s), it is now imperative that a detailed plan be developed for transforming strategy into action. Failure to give proper attention to this critical aspect of the planning effort can have devastating effects, for without a clear, concise, written plan which is understood by everyone involved, the risk is great that nothing much will happen and desired results most likely will not be achieved. The familiar maxim, "everybody's business is nobody's business" begins operating, and the most carefully conceived plans can quickly go awry. Atrophy is a very real threat at this point, and the whole planning effort can be in serious danger of aimless drifting amid confusion and inaction. Individuals must know what is expected of them and must realize who is to be answerable for accomplishment of specific tasks as well as the consequences of failure. By detailing the work that is to be done and specifying who is responsible for what, when, people are forced to act -- to perform -- to take positive steps in the desired direction.

While preparation and use of a plan of action does not assure that strategy(ies) will be put into operation successfully, they can most certainly increase the chance that people will do what has been planned using the ways selected and specified. A written plan can become an important information and communication tool within both the educational setting and the community because it defines exactly what should be going on. It serves as an extremely effective management device because it provides for the monitoring and controlling of the various activities constituting the program. Furthermore, a well-formulated implementation plan guards against people's tendency to resort exclusively to professional judgment, personal values and biases (which breed preconceived notions and hasty, often erroneous assumptions) in their attempts to resolve problems and implement programs. There are numerous other advantages to justify the investment of time in this phase of the planning process, but it should be evident that the ultimate effect of a sensible, well-thought-out program implementation plan is to increase the

likelihood that the specified outcomes will be achieved. When people are held responsible for both performance and results, the objectives are definately more likely to be accomplished.

A program is comprised of the objectives, strategies (including activities and tasks), program implementation plan, resources, and evaluation provisions. The "developing objectives," "generating/analyzing alternative strategies," "selecting strategies," "formulating program implementation plan," and "securing/allocating resources," phases actualiy constitute a program development stage in the planning cycle. Formulation of the program implementation plan is a crucial link in this stage which merits careful attention and thoughtful consideration.

Suggested Elements of a Program Implementation Plan

Provision should be made to include at least the following elements in a program implementation plan:

- Review of product objectives and strategy(ies)
- Process objectives or activities
- Tasks
- Responsibility assignments
- Completion dates
- Cost estimates
- Evaluation measures

Insistence upon development of process objectives is to guarantee inclusion of several basic elements at this point in the planning process. These are: the major activity, the outcome expected as a result of the activity, who will be responsible for carrying out the activity, when the activity is to be completed, and a method for determining the extent to which the outcome has been attained. Strict adherence to this procedure gives reasonable assurance that a consistent and complete description of exactly what is to be done will be developed, and will result in a clear understanding on the part of everyone involved. Many writers and most proposal development guidelines (especially for federally funded programs) require inclusion of process objectives for every activity. Provision for inclusion of the essential elements of a process objective can be handled in other ways which can be just as satisfactory. The following examples will illustrate the process objective method and alternate approaches that some may prefer in detailing activities designed to to achieve a product objective.

Product objective:

By May, 1977, students in the_____ High School will demonstrate an improved attitude toward the school environment as measured by pre and post semantic differential scores.

Selected strategy:

Significantly expand student activities and encourage more student participation in school affairs.

Alternative 1: Write a process objective describing each activity.

1.1 By July 1, 1976, the Board of Education will have employed a well-qualified, full-time Director of Student Activities for the_____ High School.

1.2 By September 1, 1976, the Director of Activities, with the assistance of the Student Activities Committee, will submit to the Principal recommendations for additional activities (including a brief description of each) to be available to students for the 1976-77 school year.

1.3 By September 15, 1976, the Director of Activities, in cooperation with Dr._____, Consultant, will have developed appropriate semantic differentials for administration to all students.

1.4 By the end of the third week of school, the school counselors will have administered the first semantic differential (attitude toward school environment) to all students.

1.5 By October 1, 1976, the Principal will have presented to the Director of Activities, for immediate release, a comprehensive listing of all approved student activities with appropriate descriptions of each.

Many additional process objectives would be necessary before the product objective could be achieved,but those stated are sufficient for purposes of illustration.

With the same product objective and strategy in mind, consider another alternative.

Alternative 2: Write one comprehensive process objective and specify detailed activities separately.

Process Objective:

By October 1, 1976, the following will have been accomplished in the _____ High School: (1) a well-qualified, full-time Director of Activities, will be employed, (2) a comprehensive listing of approved student activities with appropriate descriptions of each will be prepared for release, (3) a semantic differential (attitude toward school environment) will be developed and administered to all students.

Activity A: Employ a full-time Director of Activities.

Responsibility: Board of Education and Superintendent

Time: By July 1, 1976

Cost: $15,000 per year salary
2,000 per year supplies and materials

Evaluation: Director of Activities will report to work July 1, 1976.

Activity B: Prepare recommendations (including a brief description of each) for additional activities to be available to students for the 1976-77 school year.

Responsibility: Director of Activities (Primary)
Student Activities Committee

Time: By September 1, 1976

Cost: No additional cost

Evaluation: Receipt of activities list by principal.

Activity C: Develop appropriate semantic differentials

Responsibility: Director of Activities (Primary)
Consultant

Time: By September 15, 1976

Cost: Consultant - $300
Materials - $480

Evaluation: Copy of semantic differential ready for duplication.

Activity D: Administer semantic differential to all students.

Responsibility: School Counselors

Time: By end of third week of school

Cost: No additional cost

Evaluation: Completed semantic differential collected and ready for scoring.

Activity E: Prepare comprehensive listing of all approved student activities with appropriate descriptions of each.

Responsibility: Principal

Time: By October 1, 1976

Cost: No additional cost

Evaluation: List presented to Director of Activities.

At least one other alternative may be worth considering. This would be not to write a process objective at all, but to follow the strategy statement with a listing of activities.

Alternative 3: Do not write process objectives. List activities required to carry out strategy selected to accomplish product objective.

Strategy: Significantly expand student activities and encourage more student participation in school affairs.

Activity A: A well-qualified, full-time Director of Student Activities, will be employed and assigned to the _____ High School.

Activity B: Recommendations (including a brief description of each) for additional activities to be available to students for the 1976-77 school year will be prepared.

Other activities could be listed and all might then be summarized in some appropriate, easily understood format similar to the example below.

Activity	Responsibility	Time		Resources	Outcome	Evaluation
		Begin	End			
A	Board of Education and Superintendent	March, 1976	June 30, 1976	$15,000	Full-time Director of Activities	At work July 1, 1976
B	Director of Activities (Primary) Student Activities Committee	July 1, 1976	Sept. 1, 1976	No Additional	Descriptive list of additional student activities	Receipt of activities list by principal
C						
D						
E						

GANTT CHART

(Legend: - - - - - - Developmental Activity: ——————Operational Activity)

ACTIVITY	3/76 MONTH											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
A	- - -	- - -	- - -	▲								
B					- - -	- - - ▲						
C												
D												
E												

There will be times when the nature and scope of activities will require the display of pertinent information in a somewhat different format. A simple Gantt chart may be extremely helpful. This provides all involved with a time line clearly showing beginning and completion dates for each activity. Using Activities A & B from alternative 3 above as an example, the Gantt chart would be completed as shown. The dotted lines indicate that the activity is developmental. March is the beginning month (month 1) for this program and each activity is to be completed as shown by the triangle on the chart. Activity A begins in March (month 1) and is to be completed by the end of June (month 4). Activity B begins in July (month 5) and is to be completed by the end of August (month 6). Remaining activities would be plotted in like manner on the chart, giving a concise, easily interpreted picture of a number of activities required for successful product objective achievement.

PROJECTED RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS
FY _____

Many programs become rather complex and require more detailed projection of resource requirements than is provided in any of the previously suggested approaches for describing activities. A form something like the one below may be beneficial when there is a need to project resource requirements in more detail.

ACTIVITY	Salaries & Benefits (Personnel)	Travel	Supplies/ Printing	Communi-cations	Equipment	ACTIVITY TOTAL
A	$15,000		$2,500			$17,500
B						
C						
D						
E						

The program implementation plan would not be complete without inclusion of the crucial element, evaluation, which, just as education and planning, is a continuous process. Moreover, provisions for evaluation should be developed as an integral component of the total program. This requires that evaluation procedures be determined early and be built in as planning progresses and the program is developed. An adequate evaluation plan requires the presence of certain essential elements. Consequently, a more detailed explanation of what constitutes a sound evaluation design and how the basic ingredients may be incorporated in an adequate evaluation plan should be helpful at this point.

Depending upon individual preference, the nature and scope of the program being planned, and other important considerations unique to a particular program, a decision should be made as to how much evaluation detail is desired, or needed, or possible at this point in the planning process. By all means, the "Suggested Program Evaluation Process" outlined in detail in monograph number seven should be reviewed with the idea of providing all available information in order to make the evaluation design as complete as possible. Using this approach, objectives can be critically analyzed in terms of program purpose and criteria, preparation can be made to answer certain crucial evaluation questions, and adequate provisions can be made for both formative and summative

evaluation. Attention to these details before the program is implemented is essential in order for everyone involved to understand exactly how evaluation will be handled not only at the end of the program, but also while it is in operation. Time spent on the evaluation design during this phase will eliminate many headaches later. It can greatly reduce misunderstandings, last minute surprises and crisis, confusion, delays, mishandling of data, accusations, etc. which usually result in inefficiency, ineffectiveness, and the very likely possibility of an invalid and completely worthless and/or unusable evaluation. The entire program can be jeopardized and subject to serious question when there is no objective method of determining whether the objectives were achieved. Without an answer to the question of program effectiveness, no informed decision relative to continuation, revision, termination, or development of a new program can be reached.

Referring again to the product objective from the previous example, provisions for adequate evaluation are suggested below.

Product objective: By May, 1977, students in the _____ High School will demonstrate an improved attitude toward the school environment as measured by pre and post semantic differential scores.

Attribute: Attitudes (perception of school)

Procedure: A semantic differential will be administered pre and post and the direction of an individual's response will be studied to determine if positive attitude changes occur. Factor analytic procedures will also be used. Counselors will score instruments and consultant will analyze and report results.

Instrument(s): Semantic differentials (thoroughly researched concepts and objective pairs) will be used. Activities Director and consultant will develop instruments.

Evaluation timetable: Counselors administer pre test on agreed upon date before end of third week of school. Counselors administer post test on agreed upon date before May 15, 1977.

In the examples of **Process** objectives or activities used previously, provisions for evaluation were either included in the objective or stated for each separately listed activity. None of the evaluations were very complicated in the examples used. Had they been, a more detailed explanation similar to the one above would have been necessary. Evaluation is treated more fully in monograph number seven **Operating and Evaluating Programs**, but this component is an essential part of the program implementation plan which cannot be overlooked. Neither can it be overemphasized. Although a **formal** evaluation is not conducted at this point (this is done after the program is in operation), it must have been carefully planned and everyone should understand how it will be handled at the proper time. Two basic types of evaluation are involved: formative

(ongoing) and summative (end of program). Formative evaluation helps keep the program on the right track by providing regular checks on how well it is working, while summative evaluation assists in determining how well the program actually worked in terms of objective achievement and effectiveness.

One additional element which is advisable to include in a sound program implementation plan is the specification of tasks. This involves breaking down each activity into the smaller units of work that must be done. A format similar to the one proposed earlier for summarizing important activity factors could be used, except in this case tasks would be described for each activity. (An activity is composed of one or more tasks.)

Process objective 1.1: By July 1, 1976, the Board of Education will have employed a well-qualified, full-time "Director of Student Activities" for the _____ High School.

Activity: Employ a well-qualified, full-time Director of Student Activities

TASK	RESPONSIBILITY	COMPLETION DATE
1. Develop a job description for position	Personnel Director (primary) Principal	January 1, 1976
2. Secure Board approval for added position	Superintendent	March 1, 1976
3. Authorize Personnel Director to announce opening and accept applications	Superintendent	March 10, 1976
4. Publicize vacancy	Personnel Director	April 1, 1976
5. Review applications and interview candidates	Personnel Director Principal	June 1, 1976
6. Recommend three candidates for final consideration	Personnel Director	June 5, 1976
7. Select candidate and offer contract	Superintendent	June 15, 1976
8. Candidate approved by Board	Superintendent and Board	June 18, 1976
9. Director of Student Activities report for work	Director of Student Activities	July 1, 1976

Not all process objectives or activities require this degree of detail in specifying tasks, but there must always be a clear understanding of who does what, when. Some orderly means of providing this information is essential for an effective, smooth functioning program. Time devoted to detailing tasks at this point will usually result in significant benefits later. People often make the mistake of assuming that everyone knows

what is expected or who is responsible, but only when specific responsibilities are clearly stated in some organized fashion can there be assurance that this is true. Why do all of the planning necessary to reach this point and then leave the performance of tasks, and consequently the success of the entire undertaking, to chance? If in doubt, spell it out!

Summary of Program Implementation Plan
(Plan of Action)

Using a format that is appropriate for your particular set of circumstances, take steps to assure that adequate provisions are made for inclusion of the following elements:

1. Re-statement or reference to the product objectives and selected strategy (ies).

2. Develop process objectives and/or activities required to accomplish the product objectives.

3. Break out activities and specify the following for each:

   a. Responsibility (assign people)

   b. Time (beginning and ending dates)

   c. Cost (best estimate)

   d. Outcome (concise statement of expectation)

   e. Evaluation (how will success be determined?)

4. List tasks and specify at least the following for each:

   a. Responsibility

   b. Completion date

5. Designate the person(s) who will be responsible for managing the implementation plan. This requires provisions at least for the basic management functions of monitoring and controlling.

   a. Monitoring – Someone must monitor the program to determine if resources are being effectively utilized and if the program is actually operating as planned. This requires periodic checking of what is being done against what was to be done as specified in the process objectives. (Typical

questions to be answered: Is the program on course? Are people following established procedures? Are activities and tasks being completed on time? etc.) Status should be reported concisely in a regular (weekly, monthly, etc.) written progress report. Reporting dates, format, and kind of information to be included should have been developed and approved before the program becomes operational. All factors critical to the success or failure of the program should be considered.

b. Controlling -- Many variables will determine whether the same person will be responsible for both the monitoring and controlling functions. This is a local matter, but regardless of who is assigned the controlling function, it is important to be aware that this is a crucial responsibility. The individual in this key position must take the action required to keep the program on the right track and moving toward successful objective achievement. Therefore, it is imperative that this person be given the authority to do the job. He(she) must remind people of the tasks, deadlines, and major problems. When necessary he must warn implementators of factors (especially unanticipated ones) which adversely affect operation of the specified process. At appropriate times he(she) must recommend changes or suggest alternate procedures with supporting data for consideration by decision makers. Obviously, the person occupying this position should have a thorough understanding of and commitment to the program, the ability to work effectively with people at all levels, and a considerable degree of competency. As suggested in the monitoring function, a predetermined reporting format and procedure should be established and agreed upon to assure that important information will be received by those who need it for making decisions.

6. Explain in summary form what provisions have been made for formative (ongoing) and summative (end of program) evaluation.

Securing and Allocating Resources

In Monograph Three of the systematic planning series, several pages were devoted to suggestions for identifying resources and constraints. A summary of the major points presented in that publication is advisable before discussing this section on securing and allocating resources because much of what was done in the identifying resources and constraints phase of the planning cycle will provide valuable information for this phase. In fact, the securing and allocating of resources is greatly dependent upon how well resources and constraints have been identified early in the planning cycle and how effectively the information derived from that activity has been incorporated into the systematic planning process.

Suggestions for identifying resources and constraints listed in Monograph Three were:

1. **Involve a carefully selected sampling of individuals representing all groups that will be involved in or affected by attempts to resolve the need under examination.** At an appropriate point in the program planning and/or implementation process, provision should be made for securing input from individuals who:

    a. Have responsibility for planning, implementing, and/or operating a program designed to meet a particular need.

    b. Will be directly affected by efforts to satisfy the need.

    c. Will be indirectly affected by efforts to satisfy the need.

    d. May be called upon to support the programs designed to satisfy the need.

    e. Have previous experience with programs designed to address the same or a similar kind of need.

2. **Consider all factors or variables which may influence or impact efforts designed to satisfy (meet) the need.**

    Some of the categories of resources and constraints that commonly affect an educational endeavor are:

    a. **Economics** --included among cost determinants should be such

considerations as (1) equipment, (2) supplies and materials, (3) facilities, (4) personnel, and (5) training requirements.

b. **Human (people)** -- To determine the nature or type of contributions that will be required of individuals involved in the satisfaction of a particular need, those involved in this phase of the planning process might raise the following kinds of questions:

(1) What kinds of expertise, talents, and abilities are most likely to be required of those responsible for program implementation and operation?

(2) Is resolution of the need in question likely to require a program that departs radically from present or traditional practices, one that will demand a great deal of change in people's behavior and/or attitudes? What specific kinds of human attributes will best complement the proposed effort?

(3) What type and level of commitment will be required of the various groups of individuals responsible for and/or affected by the proposed effort?

c. **Legal/Policy** -- Any Federal, State or local law, policy, rule or regulation that has relevance to the particular need under consideration should be identified and carefully analyzed.

d. **Social/Political** -- What prevailing concerns or problems are being expressed by the citizenry through their elected officials? What are existing social and environmental conditions? Are any of the current controversial issues related to the need under consideration?

3. **Ascertain the degree to which each factor or variable identified above is likely to contribute to success in meeting the need under consideration.** Each variable should be examined in terms of whether it is a (a) essential, (b) supportive, or (c) peripheral to need satisfaction. Isolate those factors which are absolutely essential to the satisfaction of an identified need.

4. **Describe or characterize each factor or variable that may impact upon need satisfaction in terms of its current or existing attributes and determine whether each is likely to have a positive, negative, or neutral influence or impact upon a program designed to satisfy the indicated need.** Information relative to the current status of each identified factor must be collected and compared with

the previously projected requirements for each. The discrepancy between these two will indicate whether a given factor will be a resource or a constraint, or whether the existing condition is such that it will probably have no significant effect upon future program planning and implementation.

5. **Determine the probability of altering or modifying conditions associated with each factor which currently appears to be a constraint.** Each constraint should be carefully analyzed at this point, and a determination should be made relative to the possibility of neutralizing the constraint and/or coverting the constraining factor into a resource.

6. **Arrive at a composite rating which indicates the feasibility of addressing each identified need.** A simple rating scale, which incorporates the suggestions offered in 3 - 5 above follows:

   a. Assign each identified factor points, on a scale of 2 - 0, based upon its relative importance in need satisfaction; i.e., "essential" = 2, "supportive" = 1, "peripheral" = 0

   b. Assign each identified factor points, on a scale of (+2) - (-2), based upon the kind of impact or influence the factor, given the existing conditions ascribed to it, is likely to have on need satisfaction; i.e., "positive" = +2, "neutral" = 0, "negative" = -2.

   c. Assign two (2) points to each factor which was designated as "negative," but which was judged to have a high probability for conversion to a positive factor; assign one (1) point to each factor previously designated as a "negative" factor which seems to have a high probability for conversion to a neutral factor.

   d. Total the points assigned each factor (a - c) for each need, and total the sub-totals of all factors for each need.

   e. Divide the total number of points for each need by the number of factors associated with each need to derive a composite score for the need.

   f. Using the scores derived in "e" above, rank the needs from the most to the least feasible (from the highest to the lowest score).

The rank ordering of needs which emerges from application of the above rating procedures can serve as an indicator of the feasibility of pursuing efforts to satisfy each identified need. The suggested procedures provide a systematic framework for identifying

resources and constraints. The application of these or some similar process should produce results which can be used not only in the prioritization of needs but also in subsequent considerations of resource requirements.

Once resources and constraints have been identified, needs have been prioritized, strategies to achieve the objectives have been generated, analyzed, and selected, and the program implementation plan has been formulated, sufficient resources must be provided when and where needed to assure successful program implementation and operation. Using the information generated in the above phases of the planning cycle, those responsible for securing and allocating resources for a specific program should already be well aware of the resource requirements as well as the availability of resources. Much of this information would be derived from the analysis of strategies suggested in Monograph Five. Also projected resource requirements and/or cost estimates should have been included in the program implementation plan outlined in the first section of this publication. As emphasized in previous monographs, provisions should have been made long before this stage in the planning process to include adequate funds in the budget and to commit other needed resources to the program. It would be a serious mistake to approve or attempt to implement a program without a firm commitment of required resources. If resources are unavailable, the program should be delayed or modified or redesigned or even abandoned if necessary. As difficult and disappointing as this may be, it is better than trying to operate the program on less than adequate funding with the very real likelihood of failure and the adverse effects and ramifications which could result.

Securing and commiting essential resources ultimately becomes the responsibility of the decision makers. In most instances, this would be the Superintendent and the School Board. However, they need a great deal of assistance from many sources, and they must have at their disposal adequate factual information from within the school system. In turn, they must also be able to provide the same quality timely information to other individuals and groups who must provide support.

Information is important during all phases of the planning process, but it becomes very critical to the success of a program at this point. Its importance should not be minimized.

Although individuals will usually approach the responsibility of providing adequate resources in a variety of ways depending upon the local situation, nature of the program, personalities, etc.; everyone operates with one ever- present common problem - limited funds. Therefore, the following common sense suggestions, although not encompassing the entire range of possibilities by any means, are worthy of consideration by those who must continually seek ways and means of providing sufficient resources for the implementation and operation of appropriate programs which have been carefully designed by competent professionals.

Suggestions for Securing and Allocating Resources

1. Evaluate existing programs and practices. This could lead to:

   a. More efficient operation through better utilization of personnel, time, facilities, and other resources

   b. Reordering of priorities

   c. Review and revision of objectives

   d. Selection of more appropriate and effective strategy for accomplishing objective(s)

   e. Modification or elimination of ineffective existing program(s)

   f. Reallocation of resources

2. Review and evaluate personnel needs, assignments, responsibilities, performance, etc.

3. Conduct a cost-effectiveness study in critical areas (e.g. supervisory, transportation, maintenance, custodial, etc.) Economize even on the "little things."

4. Investigate desirability and feasibility of instituting program budgeting or "zero" budgeting (requires justification of expenditures and provides good "picture" of where resources are being used or misused).

5. Explore and be alert to all possibilities for securing additional resources (local, state, federal).